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WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

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United against Racism

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NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM SECRETARIAT

Dakar Conference

African Governments were "the first to support the idea of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and have always demonstrated their involvement in the fight against racism", said High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, during the opening ceremony of the African Regional Preparatory Conference. The Conference took place in Dakar from 22 to 24 January 2001 and was attended by over 500 people. It was chaired by the Foreign Minister of Senegal, Cheikh Tidiane Gadio. Minister Delegate to the Minister of State, Abdelkader Messahel (Algeria) served as Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur. The other Vice-Chairpersons were Minister Delegate to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Martin Mabala (Gabon), Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Frances Rodrigues (Mozambique) and Ambassador Koang Tutlam Dung (Ethiopia). *Continued on page 4*

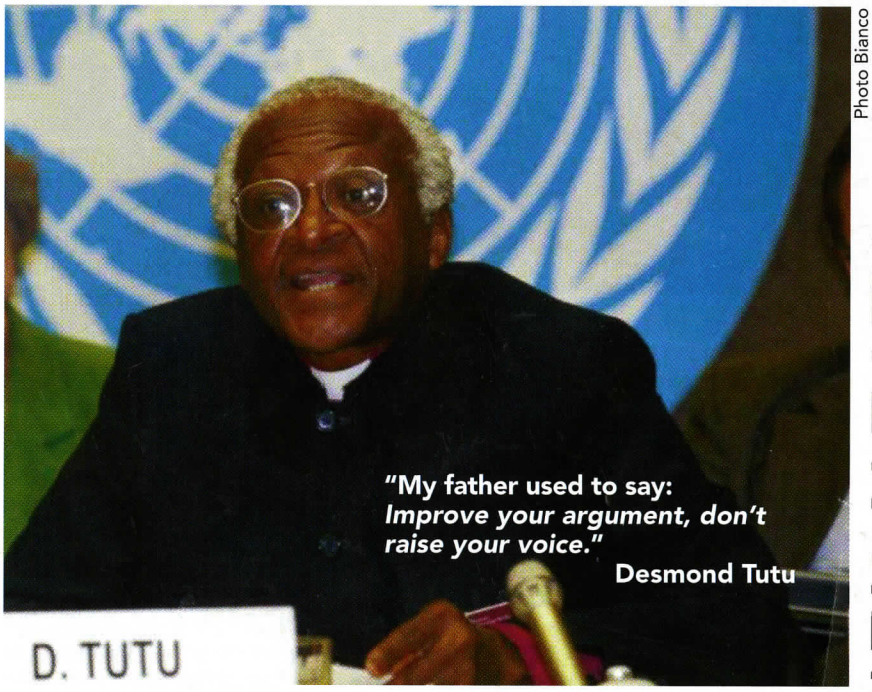


Photo Bianco

Tehran Meeting

The Asian Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference met in Tehran, in the Islamic Republic of Iran from 19-21 February 2001. The Governments of Asia held a dialogue about the sources, causes, forms and contemporary manifestations of racism, victims of racism, prevention and education, remedies / reparation / compensation / humanitarian law, and regional and international cooperation/regional and international instruments. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran organized the Meeting in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with funding from the European Commission. Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. M. Javad Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran) chaired the Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting. The Vice-Chairpersons of the Meeting were: Vice Foreign Minister Wang Guang-Ya (China), Ambassador Savitri Kunadi (India), and Ambassador Taher Al Hussimi (Syria). First Secretary I.Gusti Wesaka Puja (Indonesia) served as the General Rapporteur of the Meeting. *Continued on page 8*

Wise words about "tolerance and respect"

Each year, the Commission on Human Rights holds a special debate on a topic of particular priority to its work. This year's Special Debate took place on 26 March at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and considered the themes of "Tolerance and Respect." Organized by OHCHR, it was an opportunity to talk about religious intolerance, political, social and economic exclusion, migrants, education, media, and the role of the United Nations system in combating racism and intolerance and fostering tolerance and respect. The discussions and ideas at the Debate added wisdom, inspiration and momentum to the World Conference process.

A panel of eminent speakers participated: Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South Africa), Senator Aden Ridgeway (Australia), Sheikh Sahib Ben Sheikh (France), Dr. Nafis Sadik, UN Special Advisor and Undersecretary-General and former Secretary General of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Mr. Dominique Peccoud, Special Advisor for External Relations and Partnership at the International Labour Organization (ILO), and Ms. Cecilia Braslavsky, Managing Director of UNESCO's International Office on Education. Ambassador Leandro Despouy (Argentina), the Chairperson of the 57th session of the Commission chaired the Debate. The High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary-General of the World Conference against Racism, Mary Robinson, also participated.

Aden Ridgeway, Indigenous Senator from Australia, spoke about how tolerance and respect were related to social exclusion, and how political participation can promote tolerance and respect. He stated that "[b]y recognizing and implementing the demands for effective decision-making control, Indigenous individuals and communities will be able to move away from dependency and its negative economic, cultural, social and psychological consequences."

Continued on page 3

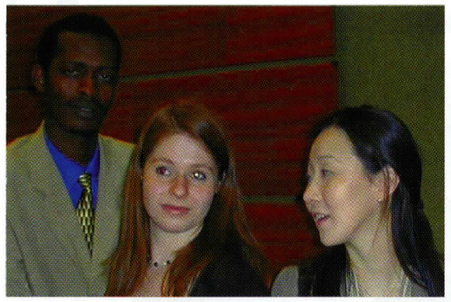
inside this issue

2 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

6 Teaching Tolerance

10 Preparations for the World Conference in Ireland and Germany

March 21: a day to remember and look ahead



Three students at the 21 March round-table. (Secretariat photo)

On 21 March 1960, police in South Africa opened fire on a crowd of black protesters in the township of Sharpeville and killed sixty-nine people. The international community commemorates this tragedy as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, speaking at a round-table discussion on 21 March at Palais des Nations in Geneva, stated that, "[h]olding the [World] Conference in South Africa will be a source of special inspiration and will ... move us to strive ever more vigorously to free humanity from these terrible scourges."

Three students from Burkina Faso, Korea and Switzerland joined the High Commissioner at the podium. They offered refreshing visions for the future as well as a commitment to combat racism in their regions. "I do not want to live in a fortress", one of them said. Other speakers included Ambassador Leandro Despouy, Chairperson-designate of the 57th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Michael Sherifis, Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Mr. Bawa Jain, religious leader and Secretary-General of the Millennium World Peace Summit.

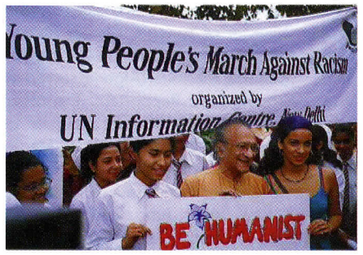
The High Commissioner highlighted the importance of involving various sectors of society in the Durban Conference, including youth, religious leaders, women Heads of State and Government and parliamentarians. She said, "If we are to make the twenty-first century a century of human rights, grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the core human rights treaties, we must learn from the past and come to terms with humanity's long and tragic history of racism."

In New Delhi, young people march against racism

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in New Delhi organized a march by 400 school children on 21 March to mark International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The march was started off by the world-renowned musician Pandit Ravi Shankar who is a Goodwill Ambassador of the World Conference, and led by his daughter Anoushka.

UNIC invited students from several schools to UN Lawns where they received sunglasses inscribed with "UN Works to Fight Racism", copies of the personal pledge against racism,



World Conference Goodwill Ambassador Ravi Shankar and daughter Anoushka, with students. (UNIC photo)

posters on the International Decade to fight Racial Discrimination and the upcoming World Conference against Racism, and copies of a message from the Secretary-General.

Ravi Shankar also formally released three World Conference background papers in Hindi, and spoke briefly of the causes of disharmony in the world. Saying that he can best express his thoughts by music, he also played a recording of a song that calls for unity against racism.

Inter-sessional Open-ended Working Group

The Inter-sessional Open-ended Working Group met at Palais des Nations in Geneva from 6 to 9 March 2001. Ambassador Claude Absa Diallo from Senegal, chaired the meeting which began consideration of the "Elements for a Draft Declaration and Programme of Action for the World Conference" prepared by the World Conference against Racism Secretariat. The Working Group will continue its work at an informal meeting scheduled to take place from 7 to 11 May, also in Geneva.

Pre-Conference Calendar

what	when	where	contact
Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group (continued)	7-11 May 2001	Palais des Nations (Geneva)	Helga Klein / hklein.hchr@unog.ch Tel: (+41 22) 917 9310 Fax: (+41 22) 917 9050
Second Session of the Preparatory Committee	21 May–1 June 2001	Palais des Nations (Geneva)	Robert Husbands / rhusbands.hchr@unog.ch Tel: (+41 22) 917 9290 Fax: (+41 22) 917 9050
World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance	31 August –7 September 2001	Durban, South Africa	Secretariat of the World Conference against Racism / wcr.hchr@unog.ch Tel: (+41 22) 917 9425 / 9221 / 9000 Fax: (+41 22) 917 9050

Wise words about «tolerance and respect»

Continued from front page...

He continued that "[i]t is only when the building blocks of the future are strengthened, re-oriented and re-aligned, that we can look forward to achieving lasting and effective solutions to what will otherwise become self-perpetuating human tragedies."

Dr. Nafis Sadik reminded participants that where "respect for human life and well-being are in question, women's situation is almost always worse than that of men." She also underscored that "[e]conomic development will not ensure tolerance and respect for women. Nor will modernization of traditional societies, unless modernisation and development are accompanied by explicit measures to ensure that women are respected and tolerated as equals in society."

The human rights of migrants around the world are of particular concern to the participants of the Special Debate. **Dominique Peccoud** sharply criticized national policies, which include drastic measures widely covered by the media against illegal migrants in order to reassure voters; but yet, perpetuate "obscure consular practices" which encourage the clandestine migration of temporary and seasonal labourers and ensure the competitiveness of the State in the martketplace.

Sheikh Sahib Ben Sheikh spoke about universal values common to all religions and the recognition of an "areligious" but not anti-religious ethic of values that promotes tolerance and respect for others. He talked about "faith" versus "theology" and the role of religion in fighting intolerance.

Cecilia Braslavsky, of UNESCO discussed States obligations to use their educational resources to promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and to combat racism. She gave several practical examples of education against racism such as the reform of school curriculum to accurately reflect the experiences and histories of all groups.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, delivered a very inspiring statement at the Special Debate, which is excerpted here.

...

"In our part of the world we speak *ubuntu*, which describes the essence of being human. I am human only by participating in the community. I am because you are. I have gifts you don't have and you have gifts I don't have – voila! so that we can compliment one another so that we can live in mutual interdependence. *Ubuntu* speaks of generosity, of compassion, of

Dr. Nafis Sadik, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson and Ambassador Leandro Despouy at the Special Debate. (Photo Bianco)

gentleness, of magnanimity, of forgiveness and reconciliation. It is *ubuntu* which could make a Nelson Mandela and the many victims of the atrocities of apartheid forgive their tormentors because nursing grudges, hostility, resentment, retribution are corrosive of the summum bonum, the greatest good of African society, communal harmony. To do evil harms not just the victim but the perpetrator as well – he/she is as dehumanised as the victim if not more so. And so we were not surprised to hear the horror stories that were told to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 'We gave him drugged coffee and then shot him in the head and burned his body. It takes 9 or so hours to burn a human body and so whilst this was going on we have a barbecue and drank beer.' What could have happened to their humanity? So we are created for interdependence, for complementarity – that is the law of our being."

...

We need so much to work for co-existence, for tolerance and to say, "I disagree with you, but I will defend you to the death your right to your opinion." My father used to say, 'Improve your argument, don't raise your voice.' It is only when we respect even our adversary and see them not as ogres, dehumanised, demonised but as fellow human beings deserving respect for their personhood and dignity, that we will conduct a discourse that just might prevent conflict. And know that when conflict does occur it can be resolved other than through revenge and retribution."

...

The following excerpts are from the closing remarks of Archbishop Tutu, for which he received a standing ovation.

..."Our victory would have been totally impossible without the support of the international community. And on behalf of millions of our people, I want to say thank you, thank you, thank you that we are free today... And maybe, if this could happen in a situation that seemed so intractable, that the international community working together could accomplish such a victory, that it's little known, that it is possible for this same international community to do likewise in other circumstances. If you could defeat apartheid in the way in which you did, why can't you defeat racism? Why can't you defeat the conflicts that are happening in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland and so forth? I, myself, believe you can.

... And forgiveness. Forgiveness is not forgetting. Forgiveness is not condemning. Forgiveness actually makes the perpetrator take responsibility for what he has done. Forgiveness is when I say: 'I will not exercise my right to get my own back, but you who have hurt me must first of all say 'sorry'; I recognize I have hurt you.' And then you will be amazed - we were amazed at how almost all of them who came to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission would now say: 'Yes, I am willing to forgive.' Because, often we think that we can pretend the past does not exist; then we say: 'let bygones be bygones'. Listen to this: bygones will never be just bygones. Wonderful, they will return to haunt you unless we sit down and take account of them. And that is what we did at home.

... And just a small little thing about reparations. How can you ever repay a mother whose son was killed brutally? What on earth could you ever give her that would compensate? What form of compensation could ever make up for a violation of human rights, for a death? And we said: it can help to be a balm for the wound ... It was quite amazing really when you asked people: what do you think you want? We were amazed at the modesty of what they were asking for. Can you help me so that we have a tombstone for my son? Can you name a street after him?

They were scared of saying 'sorry'. Opportunities that they had shut out for themselves; opportunities of incredible grace, of compassion, opportunities of being able to make a new beginning.

I go away from here deeply exhilarated. I ask you: dream, dream of a new kind of world. Dream of a world where the lion and the lamb would lie together. Dream of a world where all, all, all are part of the family – that there are no outsiders... all, all, all belong and are embraced, an embrace that we will not let them go. The embrace of a God who says: 'You're precious to me, with a preciousness that can never be computed. For your name is engraved in the palm of my hand.'"

...

Dakar Declaration takes stock of the past to build the future

Continued from front page... In addition to addressing the issue of racism in contemporary Africa, the Conference took stock of the past in order to learn the lessons of history.
The High Commissioner said that the themes of the World Conference were at the heart of African Governments' concerns. "I trust your ability to find the best remedies and solutions to obstacles raised in the combat against all forms of discrimination, including racial, ethnic, national and other forms of discrimination", she said.

In his opening speech, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal said that there is no doubt that slavery and colonization are among the causes of the low level of development in many African countries. However, he argued that Africans should not mourn their past, but should rather look to the future with optimism and courage and build their destiny alongside other peoples of the world.

The Dakar Declaration and Recommendations for a Programme of Action[1] adopted by African Governments on 24 January recalls "...the great importance African peoples attach to the values of solidarity, tolerance and multiculturalism, which constitute the moral ground and the inspiration for our struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, inhuman tragedies which Africa has been suffering for too long." *(preambular paragraph 2)*

It also "regret[s] the flagrant contradiction that, in an era when globalization and technology have contributed considerably to bringing people closer together, the international community is evidently receding from the notion of a 'human family' based on equality, dignity and solidarity," *(Declaration paragraph 4)*

Acknowledging the past

The Dakar Declaration and Programme of Action place great emphasis on remembering the African victims of slavery, colonialization and apartheid. The Declaration affirms that "the slave trade, particularly of Africans, is a unique tragedy in the history of humanity, a crime against humanity which is unparalleled, not only because of its abhorrent barbarism, but also in terms of its enormous magnitude, its institutionalized nature, its transnational dimension, and especially its negation of the essence of the human nature of the victims." *(paragraph 10)*

It affirms that "the first logical and credible step to be taken at this juncture of our collective struggle is for the World Conference to declare solemnly that the international community as a whole fully recognizes the historical injustices of the slave trade and that colonialism and apartheid are among the most serious and massive institutionalized forms of human rights violations." *(paragraph 17)*

It also affirms that "this recognition would be meaningless without an explicit apology by the former colonial powers or their successors for those human rights violations, and that this apology should be duly reflected in the final outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance." *(paragraph 18)*

The Declaration "strongly reaffirm[s] that States which pursued racist policies or acts of racial discrimination such as slavery and colonialism should assume their moral, economic, political and legal responsibilities within their national jurisdiction and before other appropriate international mechanisms or jurisdictions and provide adequate reparation to those communities or individuals who, individually or collectively, are victims of such racist policies or acts, regardless of when or by whom they were committed." *(paragraph 20)*

The Programme of Action proposes a two-fold reparation mechanism: **(1)** An International Compensation Scheme to be set up for victims of the slave trade, as well as victims of any other transnational racist policies and acts, in addition to the national funds or any equivalent national mechanisms aimed at fulfilling the right to compensation; and **(2)** A Development Reparation Fund to be set up to provide resources for the development process in countries affected by colonialism.
(paragraphs 2 and 3)

The Dakar Programme of Action recommends that "modalities of such reparation and compensation should be defined by the World Conference in a practical and result-oriented manner." *(paragraph 4)*

Racism in Africa today

The Declaration recognizes that "the African continent has regrettably suffered ethnic violence, including instances of genocidal acts..." It expresses a "deep concern that the socio-economic development of our continent is being hampered by widespread internal conflicts which are due, among other causes, to violations of human rights, including discrimination based on ethnic or national origin and lack of democratic, inclusive and participatory governance." *(paragraphs 5 and 6)*

The Declaration expresses "concern that external interference, mainly linked to the exploitation of minerals, the arms trade, the unfavourable international economic environment and foreign debt are the main contributing factors in the spread of conflicts and instability in Africa". It also expresses a "firm conviction that the development of democratic systems of government in Africa, that guarantee full access and representation of all sectors of our societies, respect for and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, equitable distribution of wealth and access to economic advancement, active promotion of peace, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution and an equitable international economic environment, is an essential prerequisite for the prevention of conflicts and instability in Africa." *(paragraphs 7 and 8)*

Legal Measures against Racism

In order to ensure follow-up of the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Dakar Programme of Action affirms that "States should consider setting up appropriate national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that these observations and recommendations are duly addressed and that the relevant legislation is effectively implemented and that all necessary steps are taken to promote national harmony, equality of opportunity and good inter-ethnic and inter-racial relations." *(paragraph 11)*

"States should facilitate access to all appropriate methods of justice and provide legal assistance to victims of racial discrimination in a manner adapted to their specific needs and vulnerability, including exemption from fees, simplification of procedures, legal representation and establishment as appropriate of special adapted jurisdictions to deal with such cases."
(paragraph 13)

Refugees

The Declaration recognizes "the commitment by States to comply with their obligations relating to the promotion and protection of the human rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons." *(paragraph 31)*

The Programme of Action affirms that "States should also take seriously their humanitarian obligations, without discriminating between the different regions of the world, with regard to the principles of international cooperation, burden-sharing and the resettlement of refugees in their countries and, in this regard, provide additional support to those African countries hosting refugees to enable them better to discharge their humanitarian obligations."
(Programme of Action, paragraph 17)

The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson with Conference participants in Dakar. (Secretariat photo)

Education and the Media

"States should intensify their efforts in the field of education to promote the awareness of the evils of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in order to ensure respect for the dignity and worth of all human beings. In this context, States should develop, where appropriate, and implement specific sensitization and training programmes, formulated in local languages and for all categories of society, in particular young people, to combat racism."
(Programme of Action, paragraph 18)

The Programme of Action also recommends that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights cooperate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and with all concerned bodies, in order to "undertake periodic consultations and to encourage research activities aimed at collecting, maintaining and adapting the technical, scientific, educational and information materials produced by all cultures around the world to fight racism." *(paragraph 20)*

It recommends that "international media, through their relevant associations and organizations at both regional and international levels, should consider the elaboration of an ethical code of conduct with a view to prohibiting the proliferation of ideas of superiority, justification of racial hatred and discrimination in any form and promoting mutual respect and tolerance among all peoples and human beings."
(Programme of Action, paragraph 9)

National Institutions

The Declaration commends "the work of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa established in compliance with the Paris Principles, especially their role in raising awareness through human rights education and training at the national level and in facilitating protection from and prevention of human rights violations, especially racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all forms of racially motivated violence." *(paragraph 23)*

Gender

The Dakar meeting asks States to "incorporate a gender perspective into all programmes of action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and involve women in decision-making to ensure their full and equal participation in the entire process of development of the economy and the output of their communities." *(Programme of Action, paragraph 21)*

Vulnerable Groups

States are also requested to "take specific measures for the promotion and protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of vulnerable groups, especially children, youth, the disabled, people with HIV/AIDS, refugees and indigenous populations."
(Programme of Action, paragraph 24)

Follow-up to the World Conference

The Dakar Conference emphasized the importance of developing a follow-up mechanism to the World Conference. The Programme of Action recommends that:

1. "A follow-up mechanism, headed by the President of the World Conference and composed of five eminent persons from the different regions, appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General after due consultation with all regions, should be established. This mechanism will function in consultation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance of the Commission on Human Rights. This mechanism would be entrusted with the supervision of the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action to be adopted by the World Conference and with submitting an annual report to the United Nations General Assembly." *(paragraph 1)*

2. "An international observatory should be established to monitor racially discriminatory attitudes and acts, individual or collective, private or public, including by non-State actors..."
(paragraph 7)

...

The Dakar Conference was hosted by the Government of Senegal and was organized in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The participation of experts, Special Rapporteurs and representatives of Least Developed Countries was made possible through the financial contribution of the European Commission.

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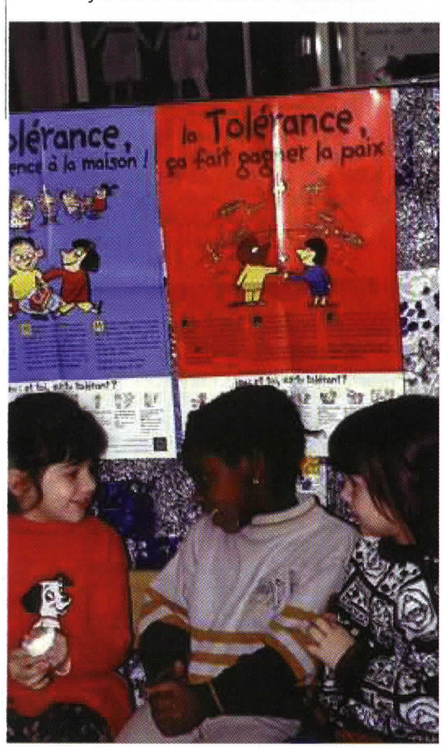
[1]This article reports on some provisions of the Dakar Declaration and Recommedations for a Programme of Action. The full texts are available on the OHCHR website at www.unhchr.ch
The full report of the African Regional Preparatory Conference will be available for the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference.

NGO Forum follows at page 11

Teaching Tolerance: Toward an Integrated Action

At the border between two neighbourhoods in Bujumbura, Burundi, UNESCO has built a basketball ground. What does basketball have to do with the mandate of the organization? Providing a place for local youth to rediscover ways of living together through sport is part of UNESCO's programme of Education for a Culture of Peace. In the aftermath of the inter-ethnic tensions which devastated the region, education against racism must extend beyond the four walls of a classroom.



Kindergarden children participating in a tolerance programme in Nanterre, France. (UNESCO photo)

This basketball project raises an important question: On what grounds can education counter racism? Several resolutions of the General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights and each and every outcome of the five expert seminars and four regional meetings held in preparation for the World Conference underscore the key role of education in the fight against racism. Education has also been identified as one of the five themes of the World Conference. This article outlines three grounds where education can counter racism and suggests further action to be taken in the context of the upcoming Durban Conference.

Classrooms and Textbooks

Teaching tolerance in the classroom – as early as kindergarden – is fundamental. National and regional educational systems constitute established networks to implement large-scale projects that reach a great number of children over many years. Although the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is also active outside schools, the organization's preferred field of action for education against racism remains the school system. In the classroom, UNESCO's preventive work focuses on 1) teachers, with training sessions on conflict prevention and resolution, and the provision of teaching materials and teaching aids against racism and racial discrimination; 2) pupils, through the revision and production of school textbooks to remove stereotypical and discriminatory elements; and 3) the school system, through the revision of programmes and the inclusion of values of human rights, tolerance, peace and solidarity in curricula.

Many groups and regions of the world still live with the consequences of the darker chapters of the history of humanity. Breaking the wall of silence that surrounds these events is a good way of preventing their repetition and facilitating the healing process. According to Edouard Matoko from the Division for the Promotion of Quality Education at UNESCO, "history is one of the most sensitive issues" when it comes to educating young people for racial tolerance and peace. Until the end of apartheid in South Africa, the country's history texts for Black children began with the arrival of the Dutch explorer, Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town in 1852 and ended with the establishment of apartheid in 1948. UNESCO is involved in the revision of history schoolbooks around the world, and has supported the publication of an 8-volume encyclopaedia, which revisits the history of Africa, taking out all stereotypical and discriminatory references.

Some States also review textbooks for racist references. For example, in Greece, an ad hoc committee established by the Minister of National Education has suggested that the Ministry propose the establishment of bilateral committees with other countries, such as Israel, Turkey and Bulgaria, for the reciprocal removal of racist elements from history textbooks.

Beyond school walls

A child's education starts in the family and continues in school. The two environments are connected. Therefore, human rights education programmes conducted in school have repercussions in the family, and inter-racial or inter-ethnic tension present in the community can be reflected in the classroom. Although this is also true during peacetime, taking education against racism beyond school walls is especially important in conflict and post-conflict situations, when tension between the groups involved is still present.

In Burundi and Rwanda, UNESCO invites both parents and local wisemen, whose moral authority goes beyond divisions between clans and ethnic groups, to join the children in school to participate in dialogues aimed at resolving conflicts in the community.

The fact that many children do not attend school on a regular basis or do not attend at all is another reason why education must go beyond school walls. Projects of education against racism at school are only effective when children are in school. The Framework for Action established last year at the Dakar World Conference on Education for All establishes 2015 as the goal for all children to have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities. Until education for all becomes a reality, projects such as the basketball ground in Bujumbura remain essential.

Reaching out to the whole society

Last October, the participants at the Strasbourg European Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference against Racism recommended to "ensure that adequate training and awareness-raising programmes are implemented for public officials such as the police and other law enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors, personnel of the prison system and of the armed forces, customs and immigration officers as well as teachers and health and social welfare services personnel". Although the society as a whole contributes to building a culture of tolerance, these are professional sectors in which intercultural awareness is crucial.

In the Netherlands, the Immigrant Broadcasting Foundation and the Media Academy have developed a project to integrate immigrant journalists in national and regional broadcasting through a series of tailor-made courses at the Media Academy. The courses cover presentation, interviewing and writing techniques, and the Dutch language is taught to participants. In addition to creating employment opportunities and access for immigrants, this project ensures that the voices of different groups are reflected in national and regional media.

The need for an international alliance

Among the educational initiatives carried out by States, NGOs, and UN agencies and offices like UNESCO and OHCHR to counter racism, many focus on the school system. However, other projects involve the family, the community, and different professional sectors, thus acknowledging the importance of educational action outside school. These different grounds of action are essential to an effective educational action against racism, but in order for this action to be integrated, coordination between the various initiatives must be enhanced.

The United Nations system fully recognizes the key role of education in fighting racism. Both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education adopted 1960 by the General Conference of UNESCO state that education shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups. In 1978, UNESCO adopted the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice affirming that States "have a responsibility to see that educational resources of all countries are used to combat racism..." Recently, UNESCO announced that the issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance would be on the agenda of the Regional Conference on Human Rights Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, which will take place in Mexico two months after the World Conference.

The choice of education as one of the themes for the World Conference against Racism is logical because the idea of using education to eradicate and prevent racism is not new within the UN system. What is new is the unique opportunity offered by the World Conference to move from isolated and ad hoc initiatives to a comprehensive, coordinated and evaluated educational action against racism.

The creation of a world wide educational alliance against racism through networking between the different actors – States, NGOs and relevant UN agencies and offices – will be key in identifying global priorities, in coordinating international action and in ensuring that education against racism remains a priority on the international agenda long after the Conference ends.

Tackling the roots of racism

The UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) contains a broad range of measures for States Parties to undertake to combat discrimination on the basis of "race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin". Although the Convention, ratified by 157 States, emphasizes legislative and judicial measures, one of its articles tackles some of the root causes of racism: prejudices.
Article 7 requires States Parties to adopt measures in the areas of "teaching, education, culture and information" in order to combat prejudices that lead to racial discrimination. The article is inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in Article 26 states, among other things, that "Education shall be directed to ... the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups..." Similar clauses appear in the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, Article 5(1), and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 29(1).

What are a State Party's obligations under Article 7 of ICERD?

"States Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups ..."

Article 7, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Teaching and education The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and UNESCO have indicated that the curricula of public elementary and secondary schools should include special classes aimed at developing awareness of the basic human rights among schoolchildren, with particular emphasis on racism and racial discrimination; and that such teaching should appear as early as possible in the child's schooling.
CERD has therefore emphasized the importance of teachers "and other opinion leaders" to be prepared to meet their important role in educating against prejudice.
Teaching young people outside the classroom is also important. For example, CERD has asked some States Parties whether they have made any effort to re-educate young adults imprisoned for committing racist acts. (CERD Annual Report,UN Doc.A/48/18 (1993).
Article 7 also addresses the education of others who hold power over individuals in society, so that they do not exercise that power in a discriminatory manner: police judges, prosecutors, administrators and enforcers of regulations.
The United Nations Joint Working Paper on Article 7 says that States should ensure access to education and where appropriate, "include instruction in minority languages at least at primary, and possibly at secondary levels." This helps to preserve minority cultures and promotes understanding and tolerance of diverse cultures in society.

Culture Article 7 recognizes the impact of theater performances, shows, concerts, cultural events, sports competitions and films on attitudes. CERD has noted that efforts have been rather paltry in that regard, and has called for "strategies involving different channels of culture and information", including "the direct and active involvement of ministries for education, social affairs, health care [and] justice." (UN Doc. CERD/C/70/Rev.3 (23 July 1993)

Information The media play a powerful role in shaping opinion. CERD has urged States Parties to "encourage ... the mass media to take into account in their wide-ranging activities the provisions of article 7, including educational action and other programmes against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance."

When the Convention was being drafted, a government representative said of combating racial discrimination: "Using legislation by itself was like cutting down a noxious weed above the ground and leaving the roots intact." Article 7 takes direct aim at those roots. If the measures contemplated by this provision are implemented, succeeding generations may yet be saved from racial discrimination.
...
Unless otherwise noted, quotes are taken from the United Nations Joint Working Paper on Article 7 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/4)

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Dialogue in Tehran about racism

Continued from front page...After the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, officially opened the Meeting, His Excellency Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran made a statement. He said that "[c]ultural diversity bears the value of …pluralistic societies and negates monopoly, authoritarianism and cultural essentialism. Dialogue entails valuable conceptions and insight such as participation, common understanding and peaceful coexistence." He also said that he was "confident that, enjoying the ancient, productive and diverse cultures, the Asian countries are able to take their part in this significant process constructively and make their contribution to the current momentum created to combat different manifestations of racism worldwide."

Women participating in the Tehran meeting. (Secretariat photo)

The High Commissioner made a statement during the opening ceremony, saying that "No region, no country, no community can fairly claim to be free from racism…it has been made clear that the unequal treatment of minority groups or migrants can only hamper a country from making full use of the talent and energy of its people, and undermine national development and consciousness. Let us build upon the ethic of a dialogue among civilizations and see in diversity, not a threat, but rather an enrichment of society."

A number of other eminent persons also spoke at the opening including Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Republic of Jordan, and Ambassador Shambhu Ram Simkhada, Chairperson of the 56th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The Meeting was attended by representatives of 35 Asian Governments and by over 400 observers representing United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, human rights treaty bodies, Special Rapporteurs, intergovernmental organizations, national institutions, and NGOs, many of whom made statements during the Meeting.

On 20 February, NGO representatives from the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Migrant Rights International, ISIS International (Manila), the Arab Organization of Human Rights, the Asian Women's Human Rights Council and Prajwala Sangham (India) were invited to make statements to the Plenary. On the morning of 21 February, the Drafting Committee submitted its draft Declaration and Plan of Action[1] to the Plenary, which adopted it by consensus.

In the preambular paragraphs of the Tehran Declaration, the representatives of the Governments of Asia, "[r]ecognize the historical, social and cultural contribution of all the people of Asia, which has always been characterized by respect, tolerance and mutual understanding, has enriched the civilizational and cultural diversity of the world and the common heritage of humanity,"and "[r]ecognize that, while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, social and cultural particularities must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems to adopt appropriate strategies and policies in combating all acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

They also "welcome the decision of the General Assembly to proclaim the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, as well as the holding of the Asian Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations on 17 February 2001 in Tehran."

The representatives of the Governments of Asia "reaffirmed that colonization by settlers and foreign occupation constitute sources, causes and forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance." (preambular paragraph 27) The Declaration and Plan of Action include several provisions on "foreign occupation," Palestinians and the "occupied territories". (Declaration paragraphs 19, 20, 21, 33, 34, 50; 15 and 17 of the Plan of Action)

The following extracts are taken from the operative paragraphs of the Tehran Declaration and Plan of Action:

Sources, Causes, Forms and Contemporary Manifestations of Racism

"Reaffirm that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that any doctrine of racial superiority is, therefore, scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and has no justification whatsoever." (paragraph 1)

"Also condemn past and current policies, practices, propaganda and organizations based on ideas or theories of racial and national superiority, hatred, discrimination and xenophobia, which are massive and flagrant violations of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, comprising civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development." (paragraph 4)

"Emphasize that poverty and economic disparities between various parts of the world which owe their existence in part to colonial exploitation contribute significantly to the persistence of racist attitudes." *(paragraph 9)*

"Recognize that although globalization, as an ongoing process, remains a powerful and dynamic force with the potential to assist in achieving the goal of development and prosperity of all humankind, there is a need to manage it properly to guard against adverse trends, including growing economic disparity and cultural homogenization, which, by marginalizing certain countries and groups, could, inter alia, contribute to sustaining and strengthening racist attitudes."(paragraph 10)

Victims of Racism

"Stress the importance of the promotion and protection of the human rights of ethnic, national, linguistic, racial and cultural minorities, indigenous people and migrants, including their rights to maintain their cultural identity and observe their values and traditions." (paragraph 26)

"Recognize that while the formulation of immigration and citizenship laws is the prerogative of the States concerned, those laws that are motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance ought to be condemned and repealed."(paragraph 30)

"Reiterate that the international response and policy, including financial assistance, towards refugee situations in different parts of the world should not be guided by consideration of race, colour, descent, culture, language, or national or ethnic origin of the refugees concerned, and in this context urge the international community, to extend assistance as requested by concerned States towards resolving the refugees' situation, especially in the developing countries, through economic and financial assistance aimed at, inter alia, removing the root causes of the displacement of such people."(paragraph 32)

Prevention and Education

"Reaffirm that education is one of the principal means of preventing and eradicating racism and racial discrimination and raising awareness of human rights, particularly among children and young people, and in this context stress the need to amend suitably the textbooks that perpetuate racial stereotypes or encourage xenophobia." (paragraph 40)

"Emphasize the importance and necessity of teaching about the past and recent history of colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to prevent the recurrence of similar policies and practices."(paragraph 41)

Remedies/Reparation/ Compensation/Humanitarian Law

"Recognize that States which pursued policies or practices based on racial or national superiority, such as colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, slavery, the slave trade and ethnic cleansing, should assume the responsibility therefor and compensate the victims of such policies or practices."(paragraph 50)

"Recall that freedom from discrimination on the ground of race is a fundamental principle of international humanitarian law and urge all parties to armed conflicts to abide scrupulously by the rules laid down in this body of law prohibiting adverse distinction." (paragraph 54)

Regional and International Cooperation/ Regional and International Instruments

"Recognize that a worldwide strategy formulated by States against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance can only succeed with the cooperation of States, regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, individuals and communities; the formulation of such a strategy should take into consideration the opinions and demands of the victims of such discrimination."(paragraph 58)

Plan of Action

"Urge States to establish and strengthen, where required, national human rights institutions and Ombudpersons and similar other entities to address problems connected to endemic racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and assist victims of such discrimination in areas of their jurisdiction." (paragraph 6)

"Urge States to establish national programmes to promote the access, without any discrimination, of migrants and other racial, ethnic, national, cultural and linguistic groups or minorities and indigenous populations, where they exist, to basic social services including primary education and basic health care." (paragraph 12)

"Urge States to provide protection to and address the situation of children, women and young people who suffer from racial discrimination in the formulation of national programmes of action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance." (paragraph 19)

"Encourage States, regional and international organizations, including financial institutions, as well as civil society to develop a mechanism to address those aspects of globalization which may lead to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."(paragraph 24)

"Recommend that high-level international meetings be held successively in each region of the world on the Dialogue among Civilizations." (paragraph 33)

"Encourage the creation of an international foundation for the Dialogue among Civilizations to initiate educational, scientific and cultural plans aiming at the promotion of the intercultural dialogue and beneficial exchanges between different civilizations which will consequently promote tolerance and friendship amongst various racial, ethnic, national, linguistic, and cultural groups." (paragraph 34)

"Request the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the context of the International Year of the Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to organize high-level world cultural meetings involving relevant organizations in the field of sports, culture, music, art and literature, as well as universities and national institutions." (paragraph 36)

"Request the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to create a database on its website which would contain information on the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, particularly in relation to international and regional instruments and national legislation, educational and preventive programmes implemented in various countries and regions, opportunities for technical cooperation, academic studies and specialized documents." (paragraph 37)

"Invite the Inter-Parliamentary Union to contribute to the activities of the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance by encouraging debates in national parliaments on the objectives of the World Conference." (paragraph 38)

The follow-up to the Durban Conference will be as important as the Declaration and Programme of Action it eventually adopts. Recognizing the need for sustained attention to the problem of racism, the Tehran meeting "called upon the General Assembly to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Declaration and [Programme] of Action, adopted by the World Conference." *(paragraph 42)*

[1] This article reports on some provisions of the Tehran Declaration and Plan of Action.
The full texts are available on the OHCHR website at www.unhchr.ch
The full report of the Asian Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference will be available for the second session of the Preparatory Commitee of the World Conference.

NGO Forum follows at page 11

The New Face of Ireland

Last year alone, 11,000 asylum-seekers and more than 20,000 migrant workers from non-European Union countries came to the Republic of Ireland. This is a new trend in a country once noted for outward — rather than inward — migration. The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland both have long-established Jewish communities, growing Islamic, Asian and African populations, as well as people from many other countries. But when diversity increases, prejudice and discrimination often follow. Ireland has as good reasons as other countries in Europe to prepare actively for the World Conference against Racism.

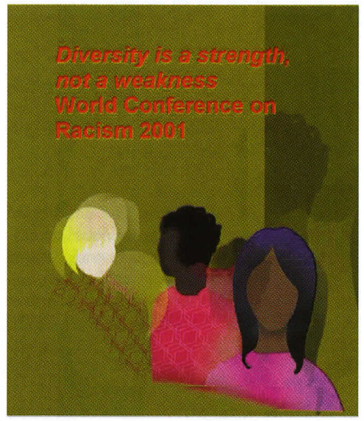
The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and the Department of Foreign Affairs worked together to organize a national preparatory conference, which took place in Dublin in September 2000. The Conference considered the various forms of racism in Ireland and Europe and emphasized the need to ensure that racism and gender are addressed at the Durban Conference. Bearing in mind that twenty-five thousand Travellers live in Ireland, the Conference gave specific attention to anti-racism policies for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, and to progressive asylum and migration policies.

The Conference outlined recommendations relevant to national policy in Ireland, and also to the European Preparatory Conference, which took place a month later in Strasbourg and to the World Conference. The Conference recommended that:

- all policy planning include anti-racism and interculturalism among its objectives
- policy decisions be reviewed for impact on minority ethnic groups
- minority ethnic groups participate in decisions that affect them
- a database be developed to track progress in the effort against racism and to identify barriers
- the WCAR address the issue of trade, aid and debt policies that generate global inequalities and encourage racist stereotypes

Other activities are planned in Ireland, of which some coincide with the dates of the World Conference. A £4.5-million national Anti-racism Public Awareness Programme will be developed over three years, to build a more inclusive and intercultural society in Ireland by helping statutory agencies, the media and the police deal with issues of racism.

Ireland has one of the highest percentages of young people in the European Union which increases the need for an effective youth programme against racism. With this in mind, an activity pack was created to help schools and youth workers develop a charter against racism, to provide ideas and activities to foster anti-racism programmes and to encourage students to find out more about the World Conference.



An NCCRI poster against racism.

Philip Watt
Director of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

For more information on the activity pack and the full report of the national preparatory conference in Ireland, visit the NCCRI web site at www.nccri.com

Germany is on course for Durban

The upcoming World Conference against Racism is invigorating ongoing activities against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in Germany. The German Forum against Racism – a round table of government institutions, churches, labour unions, employers' associations and NGOs – has organized three preparatory meetings for the Conference.

German NGOs are very interested in the objectives of the Conference and many will participate in the Durban meeting. NGO networking and collaboration with partners in Germany and other countries have also been enhanced as these groups prepare for the Conference.

"Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance cannot be countered by a national or regional approach alone."

The Intercultural Council (Interkultureller Rat), an organization that promotes understanding between groups of different cultural or religious backgrounds, held a conference to define how NGOs can contribute to the World Conference. It found that German NGOs have expertise in counselling victims of racism or racial discrimination, planning activities that encourage tolerance between groups, planning educational activities to complement government programmes and lobbying for the legal status of migrants. The Council also engaged renowned artist Gunter Rambow to prepare a series of posters to publicize the World Conference in Germany, and it is planning a follow-up conference to make WCAR information available for ongoing NGO activities.

The Coordination Committee for Women in the Migration Process organized a conference to examine how difficulties and concerns of migrant women can be presented at the World Conference.

Preparations in Germany for the WCAR have also inspired international initiatives. Organizers of the second International Human Rights Film Festival have chosen anti-racism as the theme for this year's festival, to be held in the city of Nuremberg, Germany, in September 2001. The fight against racism will also be the main theme of the 77th French-German summit to be held on 12 June in Freiburg, Germany. Specialized government agencies and NGOs in Germany and France are planning this summit together.

The German Government encourages international cooperation in the fight against the different manifestations of racism. In its 21 March message for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Government declared that, "[…]it is clear that the racist misuse of the Internet as well as aggressive nationalism, ethnocentrism or systematic discrimination of ethnic or other groups, presents a danger for internal and international peace." Therefore, "…racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance cannot be countered by a national or regional approach alone. "

Artist Gunter Rambow designed this poster - one of a series - to publicize the World Conference against Racism.

African NGOs are on board

African non-governmental organizations (NGOs) showed their commitment to the World Conference against Racism by organizing their own NGO Forum on 20-21 January in Dakar, Senegal. Despite African NGOs' late involvement in the preparatory process of the World Conference, about 150 delegates from 37 African countries participated in the Forum, in addition to regional and international NGO representatives and UN specialized agencies.

During the two days prior to the African Regional Preparatory Conference, NGOs met in workshops and plenary sessions to discuss the different themes of the Durban Conference. African experts and NGO representatives contributed to this debate and provided solid ground for elaborating the "Declaration of the African NGO Forum", adopted on 22 January.

The Dakar NGO Declaration emphasizes that it is important to "recognise and declare that the slave trade, slavery and colonialism inflicted on the African Continent and the Diaspora constitute crimes against humanity" and "accept the right of the African peoples of the continent and in the Diaspora, to just and fair compensatory measures which include reparations." (paragraphs 1 and 2) Noting that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are present on all continents and that in Africa they are "directed against such people as refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, stateless persons, migrant workers, natives, ethnic minorities, HIV/AIDS affected people and the disabled", African NGOs encourage all States "to enact effective legal provisions for the punishment of such acts", "to implement national policies and plans of action aimed at fighting racism" and to "promote partnership relationships with civil society." (paragraphs 4 and 5)

They also request States to take specific measures "for the protection of vulnerable groups" and "to put an end to trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation of women and girls, especially in cases of migration and armed conflicts." (paragraphs 7 and 8) They recommended the "design [of] educational curricula that are likely to promote acceptance of others, non-discrimination and mutual understanding among peoples and to strengthen solidarity". (paragraph 6)

The Dakar Forum was also the occasion for African NGOs to elect a Regional Coordinating Committee to prepare for the Durban Conference.

Two participants at Dakar. (Secretariat photo)

Although a good number of NGOs participated, it was noted that English-speaking African countries and other regions in Africa were underrepresented. The African NGO, RADDHO (Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme) organized the meeting in cooperation with OHCHR. The European Commission provided funding for African NGOs to participate in the Forum.

Asian NGOs define their priorities

On 17 and 18 February, representatives of nearly 100 NGOs from Asia and the Pacific region attended the Asia Pacific NGO Forum in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. They met to prepare for the Inter-Governmental Asian Preparatory Meeting that was held from 19 to 21 February also in Tehran, and to plan for the NGO Forum that will take place in Durban before the World Conference. More than 30 representatives of Iranian NGOs also participated. For most of them, it was their first involvement in a UN world conference process.

The Forum adopted a Declaration containing 52 paragraphs, plus 48 recommendations on a broad range of issues including: racism in the global context; gender and racism; caste and racism; indigenous peoples and racism; national minorities and racism; people under foreign occupation, refugees and internally displaced people; and migrants and trafficked persons and racism.

Among other things, the Declaration states that "the processes of globalization that include economic policies which exploit and appropriate local economies and force the implementation of structural adjustment programs heightened racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance." (paragraph 11)

It also states that "the large-scale movement of persons using legal and non-legal methods is another phenomenon that gives rise to various manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. Trafficking in persons for the exploitation of their labour and sexuality has been described as a contemporary form of slavery. Another major phenomenon in migration is the organised movement of displaced persons and asylum seekers which is often described as human smuggling or migrant smuggling." (paragraph 49)

The Declaration concludes that "[c]ombating racism and discrimination calls for the creation and strengthening of alliances among various sectors and groups of people who are the victims of globalization and racism. It also calls for better links between these groups and other civil society actors.

More equitable structures should replace the neo-liberal hegemonic global political-economic structures. A dialogue of civilisations should replace the clash of civilisations."(paragraph 52)

In a debate about "caste", several NGOs argued that this issue affects nearly 240 million people in the Asia-Pacific region. The Declaration states that "caste-based discrimination de facto denies access to public services including housing, education, health, land, employment, social services, and other resources normally available to citizens of a country as a right."(paragraph 28)

Several NGO representatives did not agree with this depiction and later submitted a statement to the Chair of the Asian Preparatory Meeting stating that the Declaration "did not carry the consensus of the Forum."

The Tehran NGO Forum was organized by the Asian Committee for the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) and the Asian NGO Steering Committee, with logistical help from the Tehran-based Organization for the Defense of Victims of Violence (ODVV) and funding from the European Commission.

NGOs in the Asian region have one more meeting – a networking meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal at the end of April – to work on their draft Declaration and Action Plan.

Breaking the silence: UNESCO's Slave Route project

For four centuries, millions of African men, women and children were captured, shipped across the Atlantic Ocean and sold into slavery. This forced transfer of human beings has had enormous consequences on the course of history, the interactions of civilizations and development at all levels. Yet it is a story which remains largely untold. UNESCO's Slave Route project is helping to break the silence surrounding one of the most tragic chapters in human history by undertaking scientific research on the African slave trade, by creating education and teaching programmes, by promoting living cultures and artistic and spiritual expressions, and by keeping the memory of slavery alive through tourism, places of memory and museums.

The Slave Route project was approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1993 (resolution C/3.15). According to UNESCO, the concept of "route" expresses the movement of peoples, civilizations and cultures; while the word "slave" refers not only to the universal phenomenon of slavery, but also, in a precise way, to the singular tragedy of the African slave trade. The project has two objectives: to study historically the underlying causes and modalities of the African slave trade (translatlantic, Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean), and to bring to light the interactions generated by the triangular commerce between Europe, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean.

"The executioner always kills twice, the second time with silence," Nobel Peace Prize winner, Elie Wiesel

The International Scientific Committee (made up of 40 experts from Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Caribbean) works with the UNESCO Secretariat. Since 1994, the Committee has held a number of sessions around the world to define priority issues and activities, set up institutional and research networks charged with implementing the project, and examine the question of the ideological and juridical foundations of slavery and the African slave trade.

The Committee determined that the central facet of the Slave Route project is to encourage **scientific research** about the slave trade and slavery. A scientific multidisciplinary research programme (historical, archaeological, ethnological, linguistic, etc.) is being developed through networks of scientific institutes and researchers which will carry out research on questions such as, "the ideological and legal basis of slavery and the slave trade," "slavery and Afro-American religions," "slavery, economy and labour," "women and the slave trade," "slavery in the Indian Ocean," and "slavery, museums and exhibitions."

The **promotion of living cultures and artistic and spiritual expressions** is another component of the Slave Route project. The African slave trade generated interactions of such magnitude between Africans, Indigenous peoples of the Americas and Europeans that it is evident even today in the culture, art and spirituality of the Americas. Mr. Doudou Diène, Director of the UNESCO Slave Route project says that "pluralism is the challenge of the people, religions, and cultures of different origins forced by this tragedy to live side by side [and] to recognise, respect their plural identities and common heritage."

The Slave Route project also endeavours to maintain a **living memory** of the slave trade through its programme on cultural tourism and the creation of museums of slavery. The Island of Gorée, off the coast of Senegal, was one of the largest slave trading centres on the African coast from the 15th to the 19th centuries. One of the first sites inscribed on the World Heritage List (1978), it serves as a reminder of human exploitation and a sanctuary for reconciliation. Gorée is an area of "living memory" like Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, a memorial site of the Holocaust. Gorée's value as a tool for educating future generations and as an area of living memory is beyond measure.

UNESCO's Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) — through its Transatlantic Slave Trade Education Project (ASP) — is an integral part of the **education and teaching programme** of the Slave Route project. Funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the ASP project is an education programme about the transatlantic slave trade, the suffering it caused and its social, cultural and economic impact throughout the world. The project also urges schools worldwide to commemorate the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition on 23 August. On this date in 1791, slaves in Santo Domingo (present-day Haiti) rebelled and this uprising played a critical role in abolishing slavery.

In August 1999, 100 young people and teachers from around the world gathered at Gorée for the World Heritage Youth Forum on the Transatlantic Slave Trade. During the Forum, students attended creative workshops on subjects ranging from traditional painting, theatre, dance and music to communication and computers. In one of the workshops, students produced a newsletter called "The Light of Gorée. Elisabeth Khawajkie, head of ASPnet says that "[l]inking these UNESCO projects will give to this tragic chapter in the history of humanity the place it deserves in school curricula."

Mr. Diène states that "[t]he struggle for human rights is a struggle for memory, for any tragedy not addressed can reappear in other forms." UNESCO's Slave Route Project helps to ensure that memory - so that silence does not harm, violate or kill a second time.

For more information about the UNESCO Slave Route project, contact Mr. Doudou Diène, tel.: +33 1 45 68 48 12 or e-mail: d.diene@unesco.org

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Durban 2001
United against Racism

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